

# FACTSHEET

## *Veterinary Services*

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

April 1998

## Exporting a Horse

If you want to export a horse, you need to comply with international health requirements. The procedures required are fairly straightforward and easy to follow, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will help you through all the steps.

The requirements, enforced by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), apply to any horse leaving this country, regardless of the type of horse involved or the purpose for exporting it. The procedures involved protect your horse, ease its journey, reassure your contacts overseas, and promote the general health of equine enterprises worldwide.

### Exporting With Confidence

Some procedures for exporting a horse are required by Federal regulations to assure foreign contacts that American animals being shipped overseas are healthy. If foreigners have confidence in the health of U.S. horses, this country's involvement in equestrian affairs overseas will increase, thus strengthening the U.S. export market.

Other export procedures are specifically prescribed by the importing country to protect that country's animal health. Foreign veterinary officials are particularly concerned about diseases such as equine arteritis, equine infectious anemia, and eastern and western equine encephalitis. These diseases occur in the United States but not in many of the countries to which U.S. horses are exported.

Start planning early. There are several steps that you need to take to ensure compliance with health requirements. To avoid a hectic timeline or last-minute delays, allow 2 to 3 months from the start of the export process to the time your horse steps on the gangplank. In addition, proper planning allows you to consider what to do if the horse you want to export fails to meet international requirements. You may decide to wait until its health problems have cleared up, or you may be able to substitute another horse.

## Going Through the Paces

Three different officials will help you facilitate the process of exporting your horse. You will need to initiate contact with each one.

- A private-practice veterinarian accredited by APHIS will examine the health of your horse and complete the required tests and certifications.
- The APHIS veterinarian-in-charge for your State or area will verify and endorse the health documentation.
- An APHIS port veterinarian at the port of export you intend to use will make the final examinations and arrangements that authorize your horse to be loaded for shipment.

The actual steps for the health certification are as follows:

1. You call each of the above officials to alert them to your plans.
2. The accredited veterinarian contacts the appropriate APHIS veterinarian-in-charge to obtain the exact requirements for the country to which your horse is traveling.
3. The accredited veterinarian conducts the initial health examination, forwards the required specimens for laboratory tests, and prepares the international health certificate.
4. The APHIS veterinarian-in-charge receives results of the laboratory tests, reviews the health certificate, and endorses it along with the other papers that move with your horse.
5. You can then move your horse to the port where you made the arrangements for export.

Regulations require that your horse must receive at least 5 hours of rest at the port before it is loaded. During that time, the APHIS port veterinarian examines your horse and checks its papers to assure compliance with all requirements.

If all is in order, your horse is on its way.

### Additional Information

Because the animal health status of countries does not remain static, requirements and certification procedures for exporting animals are subject to

change. For the most current information on export requirements, contact

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services  
National Center for Import and Export  
Animals Program

4700 River Road, Unit 39

Riverdale, MD 20737

Telephone (301) 734-8364

Fax (301) 734-6402

Or point your Web browser to

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov>

to reach the APHIS home page.